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Written statement* submitted by The International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 June 2017]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

(GE.17-10275(E))

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ILEP statement on Advisory Groups Report of Principles and Guidelines on discrimination of people affected by leprosy

ILEP, the International Federation of Anti Leprosy Associations, working in 63 countries to end leprosy, welcomes this report. We would like to thank the Committee for the excellent work they have done in providing a comprehensive overview of the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines for the UN Resolution.

ILEP has a strong commitment to achieving Zero Discrimination against people affected by leprosy. As part of this campaign we have undertaken work to

- Promote the voice of people affected by leprosy
- Strengthen social inclusion
- Understand better the particular discrimination faced by women
- Identify discriminatory laws that still exist in many countries
- Conduct research with people affected by leprosy about their experience of stigma.

The findings from this work support this report's findings:

- Discriminatory practices and language are still part of the daily experience of most people affected by leprosy.
- There is a shortage of evidence as to the involvement of States in reducing stigma and discrimination against persons affected by leprosy.
- Many persons affected by leprosy struggle to participate in the elaboration of policies that affect them directly.
- The primary focus of actions to defeat discrimination must be on the practical and local concerns of people affected by leprosy.

We therefore strongly support the recommendation in this report that people affected by leprosy must be involved in and participate in such actions, and that to do so, they must be empowered, skilled and given the opportunity. If active and meaningful involvement of States against discrimination is to be achieved, people affected by leprosy should play a key role in lobbying, advocating and demanding that States support this Resolution and help identify where there are gaps. The commitment to end discrimination against people affected by leprosy should be a priority on every level and we welcome the attention it receives in this report.

We are also pleased to note the attention on women and children in the report. This requires greater attention to understand and address the disproportionate impact that this disease has on women and girls. Understanding and responding to gender dimensions of discrimination must be central to policy and actions.

We strongly support the attention to discriminatory laws in the Report and ask that States continue to identify and overturn discriminatory laws that still exist, as they have no place in our legislation in the 21st century. ILEP continues to identify and track these laws, and support actions towards their abolition.

Finally, in recognition of the vast challenge of ending discrimination against people affected by leprosy and to ensure adequate attention on the areas identified in this report, we support the recommendation for an international follow up mechanism to ensure that due attention is provided to ending discrimination.

The ILEP Federation reiterates its thanks to the advisory group for their dedicated work on this report.